

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering this application and for indicating that claims 2, 5, 8, and 9-14 contain allowable subject matter.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-14 were pending in the current application. Claims 2 and 5-8 have been cancelled by this reply, without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 15-18 have been newly added by this reply. Thus, claims 1-4 and 9-18 are now pending. Claims 1, 9 and 15-18 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claims 1 and 9.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 6-7 have been cancelled by this reply; thus, this rejection is now moot.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 3, and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent No. 5,533,573 ("Jordan"). Independent claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of dependent claim 2, which the Examiner indicates contains allowable subject matter. Thus, claim 1 is now allowable. Dependent claims 3 and 4 are allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim. Accordingly, this rejection is now moot.

New Claims

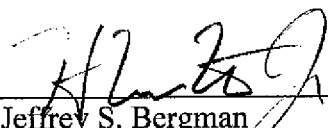
Cancelled claims 5-8 have been rewritten in independent form as new claims 15-18. The Examiner indicated that original dependent claims 5-8 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Thus, new claims 15-18 contain allowable subject matter and are allowable for at least the same reasons as original dependent claims 5-8. Accordingly, favourable consideration of the newly added claims is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 17172/031001).

Dated: May 22, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

By  51,824
for Jeffrey S. Bergman
Registration No.: 45,925
OSHA · LIANG LLP
1221 McKinney St., Suite 2800
Houston, Texas 77010
(713) 228-8600
(713) 228-8778 (Fax)
Attorney for Applicant